

II.

A SHORT SKETCH

OF THE

MOHAWK INDIANS IN NEW NETHERLAND,

THEIR LAND, STATURE, DRESS, MANNERS, AND MAGISTRATES,

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1644,

BY

JOHANNES MEGAPOLENSIS, JUNIOR,

MINISTER THERE.

REVISED FROM THE TRANSLATION IN HAZARD'S HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY JOHN ROMEYN BRODHEAD,

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE REVEREND JOHANNES MEGAPOLENSIS, JUNIOR, the author of the following tract, was a son of the Reverend Johannes Megapolensis, Minister of the Church at Coedyck, in Holland, and was born in 1603. He married his cousin Machteld Willemsen, by whom he had four children, Hillegond, Dirck, Jan, and Samuel. Having studied divinity, he became the minister of the Congregation of Schoorl and Berg, under the Classis of Alkmaar, in North Holland, where he remained until the spring of the year 1642.

At that period, there was only one minister, the Reverend Everardus Bogardus, settled in New Netherland, and his services were limited to Manhattan and its neighborhood. The want of a clergyman at Beverwyck (now Albany), in the Colonie of Rensselaerswyck, having been felt for some time, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, the patroon of that Colonie, made an agreement with Domine Megapolensis, on the 6th of March 1642, to send him thither "for the edifying improvement of the inhabitants and Indians." The Patroon bound himself to convey the Domine and his family to New Netherland free of expense, and give him an outfit of three hundred guilders, provide him with a proper residence after his arrival, and assure him, for his first three years' service, an annual salary of one thousand guilders, besides thirty schepels of wheat and two firkins of butter, with the promise of an addition of two hundred guilders a year for the succeeding three years, "should the Patroon be satisfied with his service." On the other hand, Megapolensis agreed to "befriend and serve the Patroon in all things wherein he can do so without interfering with, or impeding his duties." As the Classis of Amsterdam was the ecclesiastical superior of all the Dutch Colonial Clergy, it was necessary to obtain its assent to this arrangement, and the Domine accordingly appeared before a committee of that body on the 18th of March,

and explained his views in wishing to settle himself in New Netherland. On the 22d of March the Classis attested a formal call for Megapolensis to preach the gospel and govern the church at Rensselaerwyck, "in conformity with the government, confession, and catechism of the Netherland Churches, and the Synodal acts of Dordrecht." This call, after some delay, having been approved by the Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company, on the 6th of June, Domine Megapolensis set sail with his family from Holland, and, after a prosperous voyage, arrived at Beverwyck on the 11th of August, 1642.

A parsonage house was immediately allotted to the Domine, and preparations made for the building of a church, which was finished the next year, and was, besides that at Manhattan, the only one in New Netherland. The influence of Megapolensis soon produced salutary effects at Rensselaerwyck. The colonists revered and esteemed their faithful monitor, who executed the duties of his holy office very acceptably; and the counsels of the Domine were always received with respect by the Commissary and officers of the Colonie and of the Province.

Nor were the pious services of Megapolensis confined to his own countrymen. A part of his duty was to "edify and improve" the savages in the neighborhood. He therefore applied himself diligently to the task of learning what he termed the "heavy language" of the Mohawks, so as to be able to speak and preach to them fluently. The Red men around Fort Orange or Beverwyck were soon attracted to hear the preaching of the gospel; and Megapolensis, the first Protestant Dutch Clergyman on the northern frontier of New Netherland, thus gave, in 1643, the example of missionary zeal, which, three years afterwards, in 1646, was imitated, near Boston, by John Eliot, the "Morning Star" of a similar enterprize in New England.

An incident occurred about this time, which should not be omitted in any notice of Domine Megapolensis. Father Isaac Jogues, a noble-hearted and self-denying Jesuit missionary, while on his way from Quebec to the Chippeways, was taken prisoner by the Mohawks, and suffered horrible cruelties from the savages. During the winter of 1642-3, however, some of his persecutors began to listen to his teachings, and his situation was so far improved that he was allowed to make occasional visits, with parties of the Mohawks, to the neighboring Dutch at Fort Orange, who did all they could to effect his

deliverance. At length Jogues eluded the vigilance of the savages, and remained for several weeks in close concealment, during which constant kindness was shown him by Domine Megapolensis, who had become his warm friend. The Jesuit Father was eventually ransomed by the Dutch, and sent down to Manhattan, whence he sailed for Europe. Jogues returned to Canada in 1646, and again visited the Mohawks, by whom he was cruelly put to death.

In 1644, two years after his settlement at Beverwyck, Domine Megapolensis drew up the tract entitled *Korte Ontwerp van de Mahakuase Indianen in Nieuw Nederlandt, &c.*, or, "A Short Sketch of the Mohawk Indians in New Netherland, &c." This little work is said by Van der Donck (I. N. Y. H. S. Coll. [II. Series], p. 158,) to have been in the form of a letter written to his friends in Holland, by whom it appears to have been published—as the Domine himself said—"without his consent." Van der Donck, who is a very competent authority, adds, that it "may be fully credited, he [Megapolensis] being a man of truth and of great learning, who writes in a vigorous style." The Domine's tract gives a very interesting account of the Mohawk Indians, their habits and customs, of which but little was then known in Holland. Public attention in the Fatherland, however, through the representations of Melyn, Van der Donck, and others, was becoming more and more attracted to New Netherland, and in 1651, Joost Hartgers, of Amsterdam, published a small quarto pamphlet, entitled "*Beschryvinge van Virginia, Nieuw Nederlandt, Nieuw Englandt, &c.*" This little work was evidently compiled from De Laet's History, and Van der Donck's "Vertoogh," which had been printed the year before. Domine Megapolensis's tract was appended to this "Beschryvinge," and it forms the most valuable—certainly the most original—portion of Hartger's pamphlet, the handy shape of which no doubt gave it a large circulation. Though it was not published until 1651, or two years after the "Breedten Raedt" of Cornelis Melyn, this tract is, actually, in point of date of composition, the earliest separate account of a portion of New Netherland, of which we have any knowledge. Hudson's Journal in Purchas, and De Laet's History were published in 1625; but, excepting some official papers respecting the organization of the West India Company, there seems to have been nothing of interest respecting the Dutch Province printed, after those works, for more than twenty years. De Vries, indeed, treats of the leading events of New Netherland

between 1630 and 1643; but he did not publish his work until 1655, or four years after the appearance of Megapolensis' tract in Hartger's pamphlet. It will be noticed that De Vries, in describing the Mohawk Indians at the time of his visit to Fort Orange in 1640, uses the Domine's letter of 1644, very freely. An imperfect translation of it was published in 1792 by Ebenezer Hazard, in the first volume of his *Historical Collections of State Papers*, pages 517-526, which has been frequently referred to by American writers.

After serving for six years at Beverwyck, Domine Megapolensis, in 1648, made preparations to return to Holland, whither his wife actually went. This purpose he was about to execute the next year; but through the persuasions of Director Stuyvesant, who represented to him the urgent need of the Church at Manhattan, which, by reason of the retirement of Domine Backerus, the successor of Bogardus, was then without a pastor, he gave up his design, and, in August, 1649, was installed as the Minister of the Church of New Amsterdam, with a salary of twelve hundred guilders a year. Before he left Beverwyck, Megapolensis had written a catechism, for the benefit of those inclined to partake of the Holy Communion. This work he sent by his wife to the West India Directors, by whom it was placed in the hands of the Classis of Amsterdam for examination, with a view to its being printed and distributed in Brazil and elsewhere. The Classis, however, preferred to adhere to the Netherlands Catechism, of which they ordered a quantity to be sent out.

In the summer of 1650 the wife of Domine Megapolensis returned to him, from Holland, accompanied by their son-in-law, the Reverend Wilhelmus Grasmeeer, of Grafdyck, in the Classis of Alckmaer.* Domine Grasmeeer immediately went to Beverwyck, and remained in charge of the church there until the next year, when he returned to Holland with good testimonials, and endeavored to procure the appointment of assistant minister to his father-in-law, in the church of New Amsterdam. The Classis, however, owing to his being under censure for having left Holland without leave, declined his request; and soon afterwards Domine Samuel Drisius, of Leyden, who having lived some time in London, could preach in Dutch, French and English, was appointed Colleague with Domine Mega-

* See Correspondence of Classis of Amsterdam. Hillegond Megapolensis, however, was married, on the 24th of June, 1654, to Cornelis Van Ruyven, the Provincial Secretary of New Netherland.

polensis. Drisius arrived at New Amsterdam in the summer of 1652, where he remained for twenty years, a useful and acceptable minister.

Megapolensis was a very earnest supporter of his own church, and as vehement an opposer of other denominations. In 1654 he took a leading part in organizing a Dutch church at Midwout, or Flatbush, to which Domine Johannes Theodorus Polhemus was called as minister. Polhemus also preached at Breuckelen and Amersfoort, or Flatlands, alternately, on Sunday afternoons, until 1660, when Domine Henricus Selyns arrived from Holland, and took the Breuckelen charge. The Lutherans, who wished to establish a church of their own, met, however, with little favor from Megapolensis and his colleague, through whose influence several measures of restraint, savoring too much of bigotry, were adopted and enforced by the colonial authorities of New Netherland. Unauthorized "conventicles" as they were called, were forbidden, and for a time a species of religious intolerance disgraced the province. Before many years, however, better counsels prevailed, and Lutherans, Quakers, and other sects not of the established church, enjoyed greater freedom.

In 1655, Domine Megapolensis accompanied Director Stuyvesant in his expedition against the Swedes on the South or Delaware River, where he preached a thanksgiving sermon to the troops, on the surrender of Fort Casimir. The Domine thought the terms granted the Swedes too easy, among other reasons, because a Lutheran minister was allowed to remain in the exercise of his sacred functions there, though the Dutch had none of their own to take his place.

Megapolensis never lost his interest in the Mohawk savages, among whom he had spent his early years in the province. His letters to the Classis of Amsterdam contain several interesting details concerning them, from whom he obtained the missal and other memorials of his murdered friend, the missionary Father Jogues. In 1658, another Canadian Jesuit, Simon Le Moyne, who, in the summer of 1654, had discovered the Salt Springs at Onondaga, visited New Amsterdam, and became quite intimate with Megapolensis. He related to him his discovery at Onondaga, which the Domine communicated to the Classis in Holland, adding, however, a somewhat uncourteous expression of his doubt of the fact. Le Moyne seems to have been very anxious to effect the conversion of his Dutch clerical friend to the Romish doctrine, and wrote three polemical essays, which he sent to Megapolensis, after his return to the North. The

Domine, however, not shaken in his faith, prepared a reply to the Father, which he dispatched to him by a bark which sailed from New Amsterdam for Quebec. But the vessel—which was the first that cleared from Manhattan for Canada—on entering the Saint Lawrence was wrecked on the Island of Anticosti, and Le Moyne lost the benefit of the Domine's elaborate answer.

In the autumn of the same year, 1658, Megapolensis sent his youngest son Samuel, then going into his 25th year, to Holland, for the purpose of completing his education at the University of Utrecht, and of being ordained to the ministry. Samuel had studied the Latin and English languages at the "Academy of New England in Cambridge," and carried with him letters of recommendation from his father to the Classis of Amsterdam. After five years stay in Holland, Samuel took his university degrees in theology and medicine and was ordained as a minister. In the summer of 1664 he returned to New Netherland, and took the place of Domine Henricus Selyns, who went back to Holland. His charge included Breuckelen, the Waal-bogt, Gowanus, and Stuyvesant's "Bouwery," near New Amsterdam. The young Domine also assisted his father and Domine Drisius in the Metropolitan Church.

Not long afterwards, the Dutch province was obliged to surrender to the English forces, under Colonel Richard Nicolls. This event took place in September 1664. Both the Domines Megapolensis were prominent in the transactions which accompanied it; and, perhaps, it was owing chiefly to their remonstrances that Stuyvesant refrained from offering an unavailing resistance. The name of Samuel Megapolensis appears as one of the commissioners by whom the articles of capitulation were signed, at the Director's Bouwery, on the sixth day of September, 1664.

After the surrender, Domine Megapolensis remained in charge of the Dutch Church of New York, assisted by his colleague, Domine Drisius, and his son Samuel. The ministrations of the latter, however, were chiefly in the "adjacent villages," where he seems to have done good service. He also practised as a physician in the capital; but after five years' settlement, he became dissatisfied with the condition of things in New York, resigned his ministerial charge, and returned to Holland in the spring of 1669.

A few months after the departure of his son, Domine Megapolensis died. This event seems to have occurred suddenly, towards the close of 1669, as the Consistory of the Church of New York, on the 24th

of January, 1670, announced to the Classis of Amsterdam that their venerated pastor had been "snatched away by death." His widow survived him several years. Although he was not the first clergyman in the Dutch Church in New Netherland, he was the first who continued a settled minister until he died. His predecessors, Bogardus and Backerus, severally resigned their charges in 1647 and 1649. Megapolensis, after seven years' service at Beverwyck, and twenty years' labor at Manhattan, died in the discharge of his pastoral functions. He was a man of thorough scholarship, energetic character, and devoted piety; and he is entitled to high, if not præeminent position, in the roll of early Protestant Missionaries among the North American Savages. For nearly a quarter of a century he exercised a marked influence in the affairs of New Netherland. He saw the infancy of the Dutch Province, watched its growth, and witnessed its surrender to overpowering English force. His name must ever be associated with the early history of New York, towards the illustration of which his correspondence with the Classis of Amsterdam, now in the possession of the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, and this sketch of the Mohawk Indians, form original and very valuable contributions.

NAMES OF THE MINISTERS *of the Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York, in the order of their installation, with the dates of their several resignations or deaths from 1633 to 1855.*

[As a fitting appendix to this notice of Domine Megapolensis, and as a subject of general historical interest, the following list of the Ministers of the Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York, in the order of their installation, with the dates of their several resignations or deaths, from 1633 to 1855, has been carefully prepared, and is believed to be quite accurate. It may be added, that portraits of all the deceased clergymen of that church, from Domine [Dubois to the present time, are preserved in the Consistory Room, under the Middle Dutch Church, in La Fayette Place.]

	MINISTERS' NAMES.	Installed.	Resigned.	Died.
1	Everardus Bogardus,	1633	1647	1647
2	Johannes Backerus,	1647	1649	—
3	Johannes Megapolensis,	1649	—	1669
4	Samuel Drisius,	1652	—	1672
5	Samuel Megapolensis,	1664	1669	—
6	Wilhelmus Van Nieuwenhuysen,	1671	—	1681
7	Henricus Selyns,	1682	—	1700
8	Gualterus Dubois,	1699	—	1751
9	Henricus Boel,	1713	—	1754
10	Johannes Ritzema,	1744	1783	1796
11	Lambertus De Ronda,	1751	1788	1795
12	Archibald Ladlie, D. D.	1764	—	1773
13	John H. Livingston, D. D.	1770	1810	1825
14	William Linn, D. D.	1787	1805	1808
15	Gerardus A. Knypers, D. D.	1789	—	1838
16	John N. Abeel, D. D.	1795	—	1812
17	John Schureman, D. D.	1809	1811	1813
18	Jacob Brodhead, D. D.	1809	1813	1855
19	Philip Milledoler, D. D.	1813	1825	1852
20	John Knox, D. D.	1816	—	—
21	Paschal N. Strong,	1816	—	1825
22	William C. Brownlee, D. D.	1826	—	—
23	Thomas De Witt, D. D.	1827	—	—
24	Thomas E. Vermilye, D. D.	1839	—	—
25	Talbot W. Chambers, D. D.	1849	—	—

Korte Ontwerp

van de Mahakuase Indianen
in Nieuw Nederlandt,
haer landt, stature, dracht, manieren,
en Magistraten ;

BESCHREVEN IN 'T JAER 1644 ;

DOOR

JOHANNEM MEGAPOLENSEM,

JUNIOREM,

Predikant aldaer.

AMSTERDAM.

Bij JOOST HARTGERS,

Bookverkooper op den dam.

ANNO 1651.

A SHORT SKETCH
OF THE
MOHAWK INDIANS, ETC.

•••

THE land here is in general like that in Germany. It is good, and very well provided with all things needful for human life, except clothes, linen, woollen, stockings, shoes, &c., which are all dear here. The country is very mountainous, some land, some rocks, and so exceeding high that they appear to touch the clouds. Thereon grow the finest fir trees the eye ever saw. There are also in this country oaks, alders, beeches, elms, willows, &c. In the forests, and in the wilderness along the water side, and on the islands, there grows an abundance of chesnuts, plumbs, hazle nuts, large walnuts of several sorts, and of as good a taste as in the Netherlands, but they have a somewhat harder shell. The land on the hills is covered with thickets of bilberries or blueberries; the ground in the flat land near the rivers is covered with strawberries, which grow here so plentifully in the fields, that we go there and lie down and eat them. Vines also grow here naturally in great abundance along the roads, paths, and creeks, and you find them wherever you turn yourself. I have seen many pieces of land where vine stood by vine and grew very luxuriantly, climbing up above the largest and loftiest trees, and although they were not cultivated, the grapes were as good and sweet as in Holland. Here is also a sort of grapes which grow very large, each grape as big as the end of one's finger, or a middle sized plumb, and because they are somewhat filmy and have a thick skin we call them *Speck Druyven*.* If we would cultivate the vines we might have as good

* Hog-grapes.

wine here as they have in Germany or France. I had myself last harvest a boat load of grapes and pressed them. As long as the wine was new it tasted better than French or Rhenish Must, and the colour of the grape juice here is so high and red that with one wine glass full you can colour a whole pot of white wine. In the forests is great plenty of deer, which in harvest time and autumn are as fat as any Holland deer can be. I have had them with fat more than two fingers thick on the ribs, so that they were nothing else than clear fat, and could hardly be eaten. There are also many turkies, as large as in Holland, but in some years less than in others. The year before I came here, [1641] there were so many turkies and deer that they came to the houses and hog pens to feed, and were taken by the Indians with so little trouble, that a deer was sold to the Dutch for a loaf of bread, or a knife, or even for a tobacco pipe ; but now we commonly give for a large deer six or seven guilders. In the forests here there are also many partridges, heath-hens and pigeons that fly in flocks of thousands, and sometimes 10, 20, 30 and even 40 and 50 are killed at one shot. We have here, too, a great number of all kinds of fowl, swans, geese, ducks, widgeons, teal, brant, which are taken by thousands upon the river in the spring of the year, and again in the autumn fly away in flocks, so that in the morning and evening, any one may stand ready with his gun before his house and shoot them as they fly past. I have also eaten here several times of elks, which were very fat and tasted something like venison ; and besides these profitable beasts we have also in this country lions,* bears, wolves, foxes, and particularly very many snakes, which are large and as long as 8, 10, and 12 feet. Among others, there is a sort of snake, which we call rattlesnake, from a certain rattle which is in its tail, two or three fingers breadth long, and has ten or twelve joints, and with this rattle it makes a noise like the crickets. Its colour is variegated like our large spotted dogs. These snakes have very sharp teeth in their mouth, and dare to bite dogs ; they make way for neither man nor beast, but fall on and bite them, and their bite is very poisonous, and commonly even deadly too.

As to the soil of this country, that on the mountains is

Panthers, or American Liens.

a reddish sand or rock, but in the low flat lands, and along the rivers, and even in the sides of the mountains for an hundred or two hundred paces up there is often clay ground. I have been on hills here, as high as a church, to examine the soil, and have found it to be clay. In this ground there appears to be a singular strength and capacity for bearing a crop, for a farmer here * told me that he had clean wheat off one and the same piece of land, eleven years successively without ever breaking it up, or letting it lie fallow. The butter here is clean and yellow as in Holland. Through this land runs an excellent river, about 500 or 600 paces wide. This river comes out of the Mahakas Country, about four miles † north of us. There it flows between two high rocky banks, and falls from a height equal to that of a Church, ‡ with such a noise that we can sometimes hear it with us. In the beginning of June twelve of us took a ride to see it. When we came there we saw not only the river falling with such a noise that we could hardly hear one another, but the water boiling and dashing with such force in still weather, that it was all the time as if it were raining; and the trees on the hills there (which are as high as Schoorler Duyn §) had their leaves all the time wet exactly as if it rained. The water is as clear as crystal, and as fresh as milk. I and another with me saw there, in clear sunshine, when there was not a cloud in the sky, as we stood above upon the rocks, directly opposite where the river falls in the great abyss, the half of a rainbow, or a quarter of a circle, of the same colour with the rainbow in the sky. And when we had gone about ten or twelve rods farther downwards from the fall, along the river, we saw a complete rainbow, or half a circle appearing clearly in the water just the same as if it had been in the clouds, and this is always to be seen by those who go there. In this river is great plenty of several kinds of fish,—pike, eels, perch, lampreys, suckers, cat fish, sun fish, shad, bass, &c. In the spring, in May, the perch are so plenty, that one man with a hook and line will catch in one hour as many as ten or twelve can eat. My boys have caught in less than

* Brandt Peelen, of Utrecht, who lived on "Brandt Peelen's" or Castle Island, a little below Fort Orange. See De Vries, ante p. 91, and Van der Donck, in I. N. Y. H. S. Coll. (Second Series), page 159.

† Twelve English miles.

‡ The Cohoes Falls.

§ A "dune," or sand hill, on the coast of North Holland, near the village of Schoorl, where Domine Megapolensis had lived.

an hour fifty, each a foot long. They have a three pronged instrument with which they fish, and draw up frequently two or three perch at once. There is also in the river a great plenty of sturgeon, which we Christians do not make use of, but the Indians eat them greedily. In this river, too, are very beautiful islands, containing ten, twenty, thirty, fifty and seventy morgens * of land. The soil is very good, but the worst of it is, that by the melting of the snow, or heavy rains, the river is very likely to overflow and cover that low land. This river ebbs and flows as far as this place, although it is thirty-six miles † inland from the sea.

What relates to the climate of this country, and the seasons of the year, is this, that here the summers are pretty hot, so that for the most of the time we are obliged to go in our bare shirts, and the winters are very cold. The summer continues until All Saints' Day ; but then begins the winter, in the same manner as it commonly does in December, and it freezes so hard in one night that the ice will bear a man. Even the river itself, in still weather and no strong current running, is frozen with a hard crust in one night, so that on the second day we can go over it. And this freezing continues commonly three months ; for although we are situated here in 42 degrees of latitude, yet it always freezes so. But sometimes there come warm and pleasant days. The thaw however does not continue, but it freezes again until March. Then, commonly, the river first begins to open, but seldom in February. We have the greatest cold from the north west, as in Holland from the North East. The wind here is very seldom East, but almost always South, South West, North West, and North.

Our shortest winter days have nine hours sun ; in the Summer, our longest days are about fifteen hours. We lie so far west of Holland that I judge you are about four hours before us, so that when it is six o'clock in the morning with us it is ten with you, and when it is noon with us, it is four o'clock in the afternoon with you.

The inhabitants of this country are of two kinds ; 1st, Christians—certainly so called : 2d, Indians. Of the Christians I shall say nothing ; my design is to speak of the Indians only. These among us are again of two kinds : 1st,

* A morgen is about two acres.

† A Dutch mile is about three English miles.

the Mahakinbas,* or, as they call themselves, *Kajingahaga*; 2d, the Mahakans, otherwise called *Agotzagera*. These two nations have different languages, which have no affinity with each other, as the Dutch and Latin. These people formerly carried on a great war against each other, but since the Mahakanders were subdued by the Mahakobaas, a peace has subsisted between them, and the conquered are obliged to bring a yearly contribution to the others. We live among both these kinds of Indians; and, coming to us from their country, or we going to them, they do us every act of friendship. The principal nation of all the savages and Indians hereabouts with which we are connected, are the Mahakuaas,† who have laid all the other Indians near us under contribution. This nation has a very heavy language, and I find great difficulty in learning it, so as to speak and preach to them fluently. There is no Christian here who understands the language thoroughly; those who have lived here long can hold a kind of conversation just sufficient to carry on trade with them, but they do not understand the idiom of the language. I am making a vocabulary of the Mahakuaa language, and when I am among them I ask them how things are called; but as they are very stupid, I cannot sometimes get an explanation of what I want. Besides what I have just mentioned, one will tell me a word in the infinitive mood, another in the indicative; one in the first, another in the second person; one in the present, another in the praeter perfect tense. So I stand oftentimes and look, but do not know how to put it down. And as they have their declensions and conjugations, so they have their augments like the Greeks. Thus I am as if I was distracted, and frequently cannot tell what to do, and there is no person to set me right; I must do all the studying myself in order to become in time an Indian grammarian. When I first observed that they pronounced their words so differently, I asked the commissary of the company what it meant. He answered me that he did not know, but imagined they changed their Language every two or three years; I told him in reply that it could never be that a whole nation should so generally change their language;—and, though he has been connected with them here these twenty years, he can afford me no assistance.

* The Mohawks.

† The Mohawks.

The people and Indians here in this country are of much the same stature with us Dutchmen ; some of them have very good features, and their bodies and limbs are well proportioned ; they all have black hair and eyes, but their skin is yellow. In summer they go naked, having only their private parts covered with a patch. The children and young folks to 10, 12 and 14 years of age go mother naked. In winter, they hang loosely about them an undressed deer's, or bear's, or panther's skin ; or they take some Beaver and otter skins, of wild cat's, raccoon's, martin's, otter's, mink's, squirrel's or several kinds of skins, which are plenty in this country, and sew some of them to the others, until it is a square piece, and that is then a garment for them ; or they buy of us Dutchmen two and an half ells of duffels, and that they hang loosely on them, just as it was torn off, without any sewing, and as they go away they look very much at themselves, and think they are very fine. They make themselves stockings and shoes of deer skin, or they take leaves of their corn, and plat them together and use them for shoes. The women, as well as the men, go naked about the head. The women let their hair grow very long, and tie it together a little, and let it hang down their backs. Some of the men wear their hair on one side of the head, and some on both sides, and a long lock of hair hanging down. On the top of their heads they have a streak of hair from the forehead to the neck, about the breadth of three fingers, and this they shorten until it is about two or three fingers long, and it stands right on end like a cock's comb or hog's bristles ; on both sides of this cock's comb they cut the hair short off, except the aforesaid locks, and they also leave on the bare places here and there small locks, such as are in sweeping-brushes, and then they are very fine.

They likewise paint their faces red, blue, &c., and then they look like the devil himself. They smear their heads with bear's-grease, which they all carry with them for this purpose in a small basket ; they say they do it to make their hair grow better and prevent their having lice. When they travel, they take with them some of their maize, a kettle, a wooden bowl, and a spoon ; these they pack up and hang on their backs. Whenever they are hungry, they forthwith make a fire and cook ; they can get fire by rubbing pieces of wood against one another, and that very quickly.

They generally live without marriage ; but if any of them have wives, the marriage continues no longer than they think proper, and then they separate, and each takes another partner. I have seen those who had parted, and afterwards lived a long time with others, seek their former partners, and again be one pair. And, though they have wives, yet they will not leave off going a whoring ; and if they can sleep with another man's wife, they think it a brave thing. The women are exceedingly addicted to whoring ; they will lie with a man for the value of one, two, or three schillings, and our Dutchmen run after them very much.

The women, when they have been delivered, go about immediately afterwards, and be it ever so cold it makes no difference, they wash themselves and the young child in the river or the snow. They will not lie down (for they say that if they did they should soon die), but keep going about. They are obliged to cut wood, to travel three or four miles with their child in a wood ; they go, they stand, they work, as if they had not lain in, and we cannot see that they suffer any injury by it ; and we sometimes try to persuade our wives to lay-in so, and that the way of lying-in in Holland is a mere fiddle-faddle. The men have great authority over their concubines, so that if they do anything which affronts them and raises their passion, they take an axe and knock them in the head, and there is an end of it. The women are obliged to prepare the land, to mow, to plant, and do everything ;—the men do nothing, except hunting, fishing, and going to war against their enemies. They are very cruel towards their enemies in time of war ; for they first bite off the nails of the fingers of their captives, and cut off some joints, and sometimes the whole of the fingers ; after that, the captives are forced to sing and dance before them stark naked ; and finally, they roast their prisoners dead before a slow fire for some days, and then eat them up. The common people eat the arms, buttocks and trunk, but the chiefs eat the head and the heart.

Our Mahakas carry on great war against the Indians of Canada, on the River Saint Lawrence, and take many captives, and sometimes there are French Christians among them. Last year, our Indians got a great booty from the French on the River Saint Lawrence, and took three Frenchmen, one of whom was a Jesuit.* They killed one, but the

* This happened on the 4th of August, 1642. The Jesuit Father, whose life

Jesuit (whose left thumb was cut off, and all the nails and pieces of his fingers were bitten,) we released, and sent him to France by a yacht which was going to Holland. They spare all the children from ten to twelve years old, and all the women whom they take in war, unless the women are very old, and then they kill them. Though they are so very cruel to their enemies, they are very friendly to us, and we have no dread of them. We go with them into the woods; we meet with each other, sometimes at an hour or two's walk from any houses, and think no more about it than if we met with a Christian. They sleep by us, too, in our chambers before our beds. I have had eight at once who laid and slept upon the floor near my bed, for it is their custom to sleep only on the bare ground, and to have only a stone or a bit of wood under their heads. In the evening, they go to bed very soon after they have supped; but they rise early in the morning, and are up before day begins to break. They are very slovenly and dirty; they wash neither their face nor hands, but let all remain upon their yellow skin, and look as dirty as hogs. Their bread is Indian corn beaten to pieces between two stones, of which they make a cake, and bake it in the ashes: their other victuals are venison, turkies, hares, bears, wild cats, their own dogs, &c. The fish they cook just as they get them out of the water without cleansing; also the entrails of deer with all their contents, which they cook a little; and if the entrails are then too tough, they take one end in their mouth, and the other in their hand, and between hand and mouth they separate and eat them. So they do commonly with the flesh, for they carve a little piece and lay it on the fire, as long as till one can go from house to church, and then it is done; and when they eat it, the blood runs down their

was spared, was Isaac Jogues; the one killed was René Goupil, a *donné*, or novice. In the summer of the following year, Jogues visited Fort Orange, where Domine Megapolensis showed him great kindness. He sailed from Manhattan for Europe on the 5th of November, 1643. Returning to Canada, Jogues again visited the Mohawk country in 1646, and gave the name "Saint Sacrament" to what is now known as "Lake George," because he first saw it on Corpus Christi day. He was murdered by the Mohawks on the 18th of October, 1646. De Vries refers to Jogues' capture, under date of his own visit to Fort Orange in 1640, which was two years before the Jesuit Father's misfortune happened. He no doubt got the facts, chiefly, from this tract, which he uses freely and follows closely. See *ante*, page 89 to page 97, for the portion of De Vries' work, copied almost word for word from Megapolensis. There are a few transpositions and alterations. The translation is, in general, sufficiently accurate.

chins. They can also take a piece of bear-grease as large as two fists, and eat it up so without bread or anything else. It is natural to them to have no beards; not one in an hundred has any hair about his mouth.

They have also naturally a great opinion of themselves; they say, *Ihy Othkon*, ("I am the devil;") by which they mean that they are superior folks. In order to praise themselves and their people, whenever we tell them they are very expert at catching deer, or doing this and that, they say, *Tkoschs ko, aguweechon Kajingahaga kouaane Jountuckcha Othkon*; that is, "Really all the Mohawks are very cunning Devils." They make their houses of the bark of trees, very close and warm, and kindle their fire in the middle of them. They also make of the peeling and bark of trees, canoes or small boats, which will carry four, five and six persons. In like manner they hollow out trees, and use them for boats, some of which are very large. I have several times sat and sailed with ten, twelve and fourteen persons in one of these hollowed logs. We have in our colony* a wooden canoe obtained from the Indians, which will easily carry two hundred schepels† of wheat. The arms used by them in war were formerly a bow and arrow, with a stone axe and clap hammer, or mallet; but now they get from our people guns, swords, iron axes and mallets. Their money consists of certain little bones, made of the shells of cockles, which are found on the sea-beach; a hole is drilled through the middle of the little bones, and these they string upon thread, or they make of them belts as broad as a hand, or broader, which they hang on their necks, or around their bodies;—they have also several holes in their ears, and there they likewise hang some. They value these little bones as highly as many Christians do gold, silver and pearls; but they have no idea of our money, and esteem it no better than Iron. I once showed one of their chiefs a rix-dollar; he asked how much it was worth among the Christians; and when I told him, he laughed exceedingly at us, saying we were fools to value a piece of iron so highly; and if he had such money, he would throw it into the river. They place their dead upright in holes, and do not lay them down, and then they throw some trees and wood on the grave, or enclose it with palisades. They have their set times for going

* Rensselaerswyck.

† A schepel is about three pecks.

to catch fish, bears, panthers, and beavers. In the spring, they catch vast quantities of shad and lampreys, which are very large here:—they lay them on the bark of trees in the sun, and dry them thoroughly hard, and then put them in “notasten,” or bags, which they plait from hemp which grows wild here, and keep the fish till winter. When their corn is ripe, they take off the ears and put them in deep pits, and preserve them therein the whole winter. They can also make nets and seines in their fashion; and when they want to fish with seines, ten or twelve men will go together and help each other, all of whom own the seine in common.

They are entire strangers to all religion, but they have a *Tharonhijouaagon*, (whom they also otherwise call *Ath-zoockkuatoriaho*;) that is, a *Genius*, whom they esteem in the place of God; but they do not serve or present offerings to him. They worship and present offerings to the devil, whom they call *Otskon*, or *Aireskuoni*. If they have any bad luck in war, they catch a bear, which they cut in pieces, and roast, and that they offer up to their *Aireskuoni*, saying the following words: “Oh! great and mighty Aireskuoni, we know that we have offended against thee, inasmuch as we have not killed and eaten our captive enemies;—forgive us this. We promise that we will kill and eat all the captives we shall hereafter take as certainly as we have killed, and now eat this bear.” Also when the weather is very hot, and there comes a cooling breeze, they cry out directly, *Asoronusi, asoronusi, Otskon aworouhsi reinnuha*; that is, “I thank thee, I thank thee, devil, I thank thee, Oomke!” If they are sick, or have a pain or soreness any where in their limbs, and I ask them what ails them? they say that the devil sits in their body, or in the sore places, and bites them there; and they always attribute to the devil the accidents which befall them; they have otherwise no religion. When we pray they laugh at us. Some of them despise it entirely; and some, when we tell them what we do when we pray, stand astonished. When we have a sermon, sometimes ten or twelve of them, more or less, will attend, each having a long tobacco pipe, made by himself, in his mouth, and will stand awhile and look, and afterwards ask me what I was doing and what I wanted, that I stood there alone and made so many words, while none of the rest might speak? I tell them that I admonish the Christians, that

they must not steal, nor commit lewdness, nor get drunk, nor commit murder, and that they too ought not to do these things; and that I intend in process of time to preach the same to them and come to them in their own country and castles (about three Days' journey from here, further inland) when I am acquainted with their language. They say I do well to teach the Christians; but immediately add, *Diatennon jawij Assyreoni, hagiowisk*, that is, "Why do so many Christians do these things?" They call us *Assyreoni*, that is, cloth-makers, or *Charistooni*, that is, iron workers, because our people first brought cloth and iron among them.

They will not come into a house where there is a menstruous woman, nor eat with her. No woman must touch their snares in which they catch deer, for they say the deer can scent it.

The other day an old woman came to our house, and told my people that her forefathers had told her "that *Tharonhij-Jagon*, that is, God, once went out a-walking with his brother, and a dispute arose between them, and God killed his brother." I suppose this fable took its rise from Cain and Abel. They have a droll theory of the Creation, for they think that a pregnant woman fell down from heaven, and that a tortoise, (of which there are plenty here, in this country, of two, three and four feet long, some with two heads, very mischievous and addicted to biting) took this pregnant woman on its back, because every place was covered with water; and that the woman sitting upon the tortoise grabbed with her hands in the water, and scratched up some of the earth; whence it finally happened that the earth became elevated above the water. They think that there are more worlds than one, and that we came from another world.

The *Mohawk* Indians are divided into three tribes, which are called *Ochkari*, *Anaware*, *Oknaho*, that is, the bear, the tortoise and the wolf. Of these, the tortoise is the greatest and most eminent; and they boast that they are the oldest descendants of the woman before mentioned. These have made a fort of palisades, and they call their castle *Asserué*. Those of the bear are the next to these, and their castle is called by them *Banagi-ro*. The last are a progeny of these, and their castle is called *Thenondiogo*. Each of

these tribes carries the beast after which it is called (as the arms in its banner) when it goes to war against its enemies, and this is done as well for the terror of its enemies, as for a sign of its own bravery. Lately one of their chiefs came to me and presented me with a beaver, an otter, and some cloth he had taken from the French, the which I must receive as a token of friendship. When he opened his budget there appeared in it a dried head of a bear, with grinning teeth. I asked him what that meant? He answered me that he fastened it upon his left shoulder by the side of his head, and that then he was the devil, who cared for nothing, and did not fear any thing.

The government among them consists of the oldest, the most sensible, the best-speaking and most warlike men. These commonly resolve, and then the young and warlike Men execute. But if the common people do not approve of the resolution, it is left entirely to the determination of the mob. The chiefs are generally the poorest among them, for instead of their receiving from the common people as among Christians, they are obliged to give to the mob; especially when any one is killed in war, they give great presents to the next of kin of the deceased; and if they take any prisoners they present them to that family of which one has been killed, and the prisoner is then adopted by the family into the place of the deceased person. There is no punishment here for murder and other villainies, but every one is his own avenger. The friends of the deceased revenge themselves upon the murderer until peace is made by presents to the next of kin. But although they are so cruel, and live without laws or any punishments for evil doers, yet there are not half so many villainies or murders committed amongst them as amongst Christians; so that I oftentimes think with astonishment upon all the murders committed in the fatherland, notwithstanding their severe laws and heavy penalties. These Indians, though they live without laws, or fear of punishment, do not—at least, they very seldom—kill people, unless it may be in a great passion, or a hand-to-hand fight. Wherefore we go wholly unconcerned along with the Indians and meet each other an hour's walk off in the woods, without doing any harm to one another.

JOHANNES MEGAPOLENSIS.